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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/217,633	12/22/1998	MASAHIRO NAKAMORI	0505-047P	4151
2292	7590	12/05/2003		EXAMINER
BIRCH STEWART KOLASCH & BIRCH			TRAN, HIEN THI	
PO BOX 747				
FALLS CHURCH, VA 22040-0747			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			1764	

DATE MAILED: 12/05/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	09/217,633	NAKAMORI ET AL.
	Examiner	Art Unit
	Hien Tran	1764

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 29 September 2003.

2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1,6-8,13-15,18-20,23 and 24 is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6) Claim(s) 1,6-8,13-15,18-20,23 and 24 is/are rejected.

7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

13) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application) since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.
 a) The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.

14) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121 since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
 2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
 3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____.

4) Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s) _____.
 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
 6) Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

3. Claims 1, 6-8, 13-15, 18-20, 23-24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Whittenberger et al (5,651,906) in view of Kohno et al (5,653,825), Arai et al (5,151,254), Nonnenmann (4,665,051) and either Toyoda et al (5,336,472) or Maus (4,713,361).

Whittenberger et al disclose a catalytic converter comprising:

a honeycomb structure shaped in a cylindrical form, said honeycomb structure having a plurality of channels (i.e. air vents) extending in an axial direction thereof; and

a cylindrical case covering an outer peripheral surface of the honeycomb structure wherein the case is composed of stainless steel.

The apparatus of Whittenberger et al is substantially the same as that of the instant claims, but fails to disclose whether the stainless steel case may be ferritic stainless steel case containing Mo.

However, Kohno et al disclose the conventionality of using ferritic stainless steel containing Mo of less than or equal to 2% for constructing converter housing due to its excellency in stress corrosion cracking resistance.

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to use the ferritic stainless steel containing Mo as taught by Kohno et al as an alternate material for the converter housing in the apparatus of Whittenberger et al for an improved stress corrosion cracking resistance and since use of such is conventional and no cause for patentability here.

Since Kohno et al discloses the stainless steel containing Mo of less than or equal 2%, such range overlaps the range of 0.3 to 2% recited in the instant claim.

Selecting the Mo range from 2-2.5% is within the purview of one having ordinary skill in the art during routine experimentation and optimization of the system.

Since the modified apparatus of Whittenberger discloses stainless steel for both casing and honeycomb structure, both casing and honeycomb structure inherently have the same coefficient of linear expansions as that of the instant claims.

With respect to the equal size of the air vents, Toyoda et al and Maus disclose the conventionality of providing a honeycomb structure having air vents of equal size and disposed in concentric rings.

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to alternately construct the honeycomb structure of Whittenberger et al with air vents of equal size as taught by Toyoda

et al and Maus, since such is conventional in the art which is no cause for patentability here and since such a modification would have involved a mere change in the shape and size of the air vents. A change in shape is generally recognized as being within the level of ordinary skill in the art, absence showing any unexpected results. *In re Dailey*, 357 F.2d 669, 149 USPQ 47 (CCPA 1966). A change in size is generally recognized as being within the level of ordinary skill in the art.

With respect to outermost air vent, Toyoda et al and Maus disclose the conventionality of providing the honeycomb structure in which the outermost air vents are formed by cooperation of an entire surface of the case and a waved plate of the honeycomb structure (note the Figure in Maus and col. 5, line 19-23 in Toyoda et al).

It would have been obvious matter of design choice to alternately locate the waved plate at the outermost surface since such a modification would have involved a mere substitution of known equivalent structures as evidenced by either Toyoda et al and Maus. A substitution of known equivalent structures is generally recognized as being within the level of ordinary skill in the art. *In re Fout* 213 USPQ 532 (CCPA 1982); *In re Susi* 169 USPQ 423 (CCPA 1971); *In re Siebentritt* 152 USPQ 618 (CCPA 1967); *In re Ruff* 118 USPQ 343 (CCPA 1958).

With respect to the limitation of a catalyst layer formed on an inner surface of the case, Arai et al discloses provision of coating a catalyst layer on the inside surface of the casing (col. 6, lines 39-42).

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to coat the catalyst layer on the inside surface of the casing of Whittenberger et al so as to increase the exhaust gas cleaning effect as taught Arai et al.

Since Whittenberger et al discloses that the honeycomb structure and the casing are formed of stainless steel, apparently the structure and the casing will have a reduced linear expansion during warm up and use as that of the instant claims.

With respect to the newly added limitation, Nonnenmann discloses the conventionality of providing a honeycomb having wave plates and base plates, the waved plates having sections that are substantially flat and each of the base plates having an inner surface and an outer surface being disposed against the flat sections of adjoining ones of the waved plates located inwardly and outwardly thereof, respectively.

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to substitute the honeycomb of Nonnenmann for the honeycomb in the modified apparatus of Whittenberger et al for the known and expected results of obtaining the same results in the absence of unexpected results.

4. Claims 1, 6-8, 13-15, 18-20, 23-24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Honma (5,323,608) in view of Kohno et al (5,653,825), Arai et al (5,151,254), Nonnenmann (4,665,051) and either Toyoda et al (5,336,472) or Maus (4,713,361).

Honma discloses a catalytic converter comprising:

a honeycomb structure 14 shaped in a cylindrical form, said honeycomb structure having a plurality of channels (i.e. air vents) extending in an axial direction thereof; and

a cylindrical case 12 covering an outer peripheral surface of the honeycomb structure wherein the case is composed of stainless steel (col. 2, line 58 to col. 3, line 30).

The apparatus of Honma is substantially the same as that of the instant claims, but fails to disclose whether the stainless steel case may be ferritic stainless steel case containing Mo.

The same comments with respect to Kohno et al, Arai et al, Toyoda et al, Nonnenmann and Maus apply.

Response to Arguments

5. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1, 6-8, 13-15, 18-20, 23-24 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Conclusion

6. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Hien Tran whose telephone number is (703) 308-4253 **. The examiner can normally be reached on Tuesday-Friday from 7:30AM-6:00PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Glenn Calderola can be reached on (703) 308-6824. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are (703) 872-9310 for regular communications and (703) 872-9311 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 308-0661.

***As of December 10, 2003, the telephone number will be changed to 571-272-1454.*

HT
December 1, 2003

Hien Tran
Hien Tran
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 1764